

Message Text

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50

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ADP-00 EUR-25 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-09 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-12 PRS-01 EB-11

PM-09 NSC-10 SS-14 OMB-01 RSR-01 /133 W

----- 011077

R 091500 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1010

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USINT CAIRO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BEIRUT 2753

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PINT SY

SUBJ: SYRIAN CONSTITUTION

REF: BEIRUT 2542

1. SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASSAD DELIVERED LIVE RADIO BROADCAST MAR 8 ON 10 TH ANNIVERSARY OF TAKEOVER OF SYRIAN GOVT BY BAATH PARTY. MAJOR PORTION OF SPEECH DEVOTED TO LISTING IN DETAIL SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE ASSAD BECAME PRESIDENT IN NOV 1970. FOLLOWING THIS ASSAD CHARGED THAT " REACTIONARY ELEMENTS" (UNSPECIFIED) HAD RECENTLY BEGUN ATTACK HIS REGIME, USING PRETEXT OF NEW CONSTITUTION BUT REALLY TRYING OBSTRUCT ADVANCES WHICH SARG HAS ACHIEVED. HE EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT NEW CONSTITUTION WILL BE APPROVED OVERWHELMINGLY IN MAR 12 REFERENDUM, THEREBY LEADING TO " RETURN TO NORMAL LIFE AFTER FIRST YEARS OF REVOLUTION." ON FOREIGN POLICY, ASSAD REPORTEDLY TOOK STANDARD LINE THAT OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND RIGHTS OF PALESTINE PEOPLE CAN ONLY BE REGAINED BY FORCE, AND REAFFIRMED SYRIA' S SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION " AS INTEGRAL PART OF ARAB REVOLUTION."

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2. ACCORDING TO USINT DAMASCUS, DEMONSTRATIONS AND VIOLENCE CONNECTED WITH NEW CONSTITUTION DIED OUT DURING FIRST WEEK OF MAR AND THIS WEEK HAS BEEN QUIET. HOWEVER, RIGHTWING CHALLENGE WAS FIRST PUBLIC DISPLAY OF OPPOSITION TO ASSAD REGIME SINCE NOV 1970 AND COULD PRESAGE FURTHER DISPLAYS. ACCORDING TO USINT, WIDESPREAD BELIEF IN DAMASCUS IS THAT LIBYA DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN EXPLOITING RIGHT- WING , ISLAMIC SENTIMENTS, WITH SOME SUSPICION EVEN DIRECTED AT RIGHT- WING ELEMENTS IN LEBANON WHO UNHAPPY OVER SARG CRITICISMS OF LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER AND SUPPORT OF LEFTIST LEBANESE POLITICIAN KAMAL JUMBLATT. RECENT VISITS TO DAMASCUS BY JALLOUD (LAST WEEK) AND MILITARY MISSION (WHICH REPORTEDLY ARRIVED MAR 8 FROM TRIPOLI) BELIEVE RELATED TO HEIGHTENED SYRIAN- LIBYAN TENSION. DECON 3/9/74.
BUFFUM

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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